

Message Text

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S E C R E T CAIRO 10181

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, SY

SUBJECT: FAHMY AND SYRIA

REF STATE 243376

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR INSTRUCTIONS, I GENTLY CHIDED FAHMY LAST NIGHT ABOUT HIS NEWS RELEASE THAT PRESIDENT FORD WILL MEET PRESIDENT ASAD IN EUROPE IN NOVEMBER. IN ORDER TO BE CANDID WITH OUR EGYPTIAN FRIENDS, WE HAD SOUGHT TO KEEP THEM INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS MATTER. HOWEVER, HAD DONE SO ON THE UNDERSTANDING THIS INFORMATION IS SENSITIVE AND WOULD BE TREATED AS SUCH. PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE FROM WASHINGTON, YOU HAD ASKED ME TO TELL FAHMY THAT WE HAVE RECENTLY SENT A MESSAGE TO ASAD OFFERING SUCH A SUMMIT ON NOVEMBER 17, BUT HAVE AS YET RECEIVED NO REPLY TO THAT MESSAGE. AS FAMY WAS SURELY AWARE, PUBLICATION IN THE CAIRO PRESS OF A POSSIBLE FORD-ASAD MEETING AT A TIME WHEN ASAD IS IN MOSCOW IS BOUND TO BE VIEWED AS US-EGYPTIAN COLLUSION AGAINST SYRIA AND MAKES IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR ASAD TO RESPOND POSITIVELY. I RECALLED SADAT'S AND HIS FREQUENT ENJOINDERS KEEP THE DIALOGUE OPEN WITH SYRIA AND THE IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO TRYING TO MOVE AHEAD ON THE GOLAN FRONT. WE ACCEPT GOE'S

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ESTIMATE AND HAVE BEEN TRYING TO DO JUST THAT. HOWEVER,

THE JOB IS MADE THAT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT BY SUCH DISCLOSURES. I ALSO GAVE HIM YOUR ESTIMATE THAT AFTER THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT IS WELL ALONG TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION, THE SYRIANS WILL TAKE ANOTHER LOOK.

2. FAHMY WAS QUITE UNREPENTENT. HE READILY CONCEDED HAVING GIVEN THIS INFORMATION TO THE PRESS. HE HAD DONE SO, HE EMPHASIZED, BECAUSE ALL OF US ARE ENGAGED IN "POLITICAL WARFARE" WITH THE SYRIANS AND THE SOVIETS. ASAD'S SOLE PURPOSE IN GOING TO MOSCOW IS TO PLAN FOR CONTINUED AGITATION AGAINST THE RECENT DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. THE SOVIETS WILL SHOWER MORE ARMS AND MONEY ON THE SYRIANS TO FURTHER THAT PURPOSE. HE ADMITTED THAT THE DISCLOSURE OF A POSSIBLE FORD-ASAD MEETING WOULD EMBARRASS ASAD AND AFFIRMED THIS HAD BEEN HIS PURPOSE. HE WAS SURE ASAD HAD NEVER TOLD THE SOVIETS ABOUT SUCH A POSSIBLE MEETING AND WOULD HAVE SOME AWKWARD EXPLAINING TO DO. WHILE THE SOVIETS, SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS ARE STIRRING UP THINGS IN THE AREA, FAHMY CHARGED, THE US SITS IDLY BY.

3. I TOLD HIM HIM THIS WAS UTTERLY UNTRUE. AS HE KNEW, YOU HAD SPENT MUCH TIME IN THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS TRYING TO GET CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL FOR THE AMERICAN TECHNICIANS. THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE DIENSENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. IT HAD TAKEN LONGER TO OBTAIN CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL THAN WE HAD INITIALLY ANTICIPATED, BUT THIS HAS NOW BEEN ACHIEVED. IT IS YOUR JUDGMENT THAT IT IS NOT IN THE SOVIET'S INTEREST TO MOVE THINGS FORWARD TOO QUICKLY. DESPITE HIS PUBLIC STATEMENT AT THE UNGA, GROMYKO DOES NOT WANT TO GO TO GENEVA WITHOUT THE PALESTINIANS. YOU HOPE TO MEET WITH GROMYKO ON THE 12, 13, OR 14 OF THIS MONTH TO DISCUSS THE MATTER FURTHER. FAHMY IMMEDIATELY WANTED TO LEAK THIS TO THE PRESS, BUT I TOLD HIM THAT IF HE DID, HE WOULD AGAIN BE VIOLATING A CONFIDENCE. HE THEREUPON DROPPED THE IDEA.

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4. I STRESSED THAT WE HAVE BEEN NO LESS ACTIVE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE AREA THAN GOE HAS BEEN. ANY SUGGESTIONS TO THE CONTRARY ARE BASELESS. FAHMY GRUMBLED THAT PERHAPS THIS WAS TRUE, BUT THERE IS LITTLE VISIBLE EVIDENCE OF IT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ALL THE MIDDLE EAST KNOWS IS THE DISCLOSURES OF OUR COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL. (OUR DISCUSSION ON THIS POINT FOLLOWS BY SEPTEL.)

5. I EMPHASIZED TO FAHMY THAT WE WOULD LIKE A SYRIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS TO BEGIN IF THE PARTIES WISH. WE WOULD LIKE IT FOR TWO REASONS: FIRST, BECAUSE WE KNOW THE IMPORTANCE SADAT ATTACHES TO IT; AND SECOND, BECAUSE IT WOULD HELP TO BRING HOME ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW PUBLIC ATTITUDES THAT I HAD ALREADY DESCRIBED TO HIM.

6. FAHMY AFFIRMED THAT GOE ALSO CONTINUES TO WANT A SECOND GOLAN DISENGAGEMENT. PERHAPS ASAD WILL ULTIMATELY COME AROUND ON THIS MATTER. FOR NOW, HOWEVER, ASAD SEEMS BENT ON CONTINUING HIS ACTIVE AGITATION AGAINST THE RECENT SINAI AGREEMENT. IT WAS ASAD, ACCORDING TO FAHMY, WHO ASKED TO GO TO MOSCOW TO COORDINATE PLANS TO DISRUPT THE SINAI AGREEMENT. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, GOE MUST VIEW HIM AS AN ACTIVE TROUBLEMAKER AND TAKE WHATEVER STEPS MAY BE NEEDED TO NEUTRALIZE HIS POTENTIAL TO DO DAMAGE. USA SHOULD RECOGNIZE THREAT AND ASAD POSES TO WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.

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